

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus, comprising:

a sheet transport path leading from a sheet feeding section through an image forming position to a sheet ejecting section;

a lower sheet ejecting roller arranged in the sheet ejecting section below the sheet transport path; and

an upper sheet ejecting roller arranged above the sheet transport path so as to be in direct contact with the lower sheet ejecting roller,

wherein the upper sheet ejecting roller is divided in a direction perpendicular to a sheet transport direction into a plurality of portions and the portions are in direct contact with the lower sheet ejecting roller at respective points in the sheet transport direction,

wherein the upper sheet ejecting roller includes a sheet pinch roller, a first lift-preventing roller, and a second lift-preventing roller,

wherein the sheet pinch roller, the first lift-preventing roller, and the second lift-preventing roller are in direct contact with the lower sheet ejecting roller at respective points in the sheet transport direction, and

wherein the sheet pinch roller, the first lift-preventing roller, and the second lift-preventing roller are not in the same straight line parallel to the sheet transport direction.

2. (Original) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein part or all of the portions of the upper sheet ejecting roller are displaced from one another upstream or downstream in the sheet transport direction.

3. (Canceled).

4. (Original) An image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the sheet pinch roller, the first lift-preventing roller, and the second lift-preventing roller are arranged symmetrically in relation to a center line of the sheet transport path.

5. (New) The image forming apparatus of claim 1, wherein the upper sheet ejecting roller includes a plurality of sheet pinch roller and a plurality of first lift-preventing rollers wherein a number of first lift preventing rollers is greater than a number of sheet pinch rollers.

6. (New) The image forming apparatus of claim 5, wherein a number of sheet pinch rollers is greater than a number of second lift-preventing rollers.

7. (New) The image forming apparatus of claim 6, wherein the second lift-preventing roller is positioned downstream in a sheet transport direction from the plurality of sheet pinch rollers and wherein the plurality of sheet pinch rollers are positioned downstream in a sheet transport direction from the plurality of first lift-preventing rollers.

8. (New) The image forming apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first lift-preventing roller is positioned approximately 4 mm upstream of the sheet pinch rollers along the sheet transport path.

9. (New) The image forming apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second lift preventing roller is positioned approximately 4 mm downstream of the sheet pinch roller.

10. (New) The image forming apparatus of claim 4, wherein the second lift-preventing roller is positioned at the center line of the sheet transport path.

11. (New) The image forming apparatus of claim 7, wherein the single second lift preventing roller is arranged between respective two neighboring sheet pinch rollers and each of the sheet pinch rollers is arranged between respective two neighboring first lift preventing rollers.